

the border, and they are carrying luggage with them. In fact, Border Patrol has had to actually limit the weight that they can actually bring in luggage to no more than 50 pounds. They come into the process area. They are bringing their luggage with them. They are dressed in nice clothes. They are clean. They just got a shower the day before.

They come across the border. They wait on Border Patrol. We take them to the processing area. In fact, when I got to the processing area, one of the Border Patrol agents walked up to me and said, "Do you see the lady behind you?" And I turned around and said, "Yes."

She said, "She is wearing a Versace dress."

I said that probably should mean something to me as a guy, but it currently doesn't. And my wife later explained to me, "That is a pretty expensive dress."

Why are we seeing people like that crossing the border? Because it is easier to come in illegally into the country now than it is legally.

Most years we have a million people a year that legally cross our border—legally—that go through the process, fill out the paperwork. We do a background check on those individuals. They come through and come into our country, and we celebrate people who come legally into our country and have for over two centuries. These individuals are finding it faster and cheaper to just pay the cartel, fly to Mexico, walk across the border. And when you walk across the border, you are in the country not just for a few months. Right now, when you cross the border and enter into this area, as you walk across the border you are given a work permit and the ability to stay in the United States for 8 years until your asylum hearing comes up.

Why do we have people coming from all over the world? We have a million people doing it legally, but last year we had 2 million people do it illegally because it is faster to just illegally come into the border.

Let me ask a simple question to this body: Do we really want a system that incentivizes illegal activity as the entrance into the United States of America, because right now the incentive is to come into the country illegally?

Let me phrase it this way. For the individuals who come across this border, we do not do a background check on these individuals. We have no idea any criminal history they have in the country from where they are coming. We do a background check with American records. We know if they committed a crime here in the past, but we have no idea from any of the countries that they are coming from. And let me remind you, in Yuma, when I was there a week ago, the week before, 50 different nations crossed that border that week. We have no criminal background check on any of those individuals.

What else happens with this? Because of the chaos that is happening here and

Border Patrol are having to run their Uber XL vans to be able to pick people up and take them to processing, and they have to come off the line to be able to come into the processing center. What else is happening? The open desert areas not far from here, where they know the drug traffickers are actually moving large quantities of drugs, they don't have enough agents to be able to patrol that anymore. They can see them on cameras. They just don't have enough people to get to it.

The checkpoints that are on the highways typically leading out from this area to try to pick up the gun and drug smugglers coming in and out of the country, those checkpoints don't exist anymore. Why? Because they don't have enough staff anymore because they are managing this chaos at the border.

We are losing our security presence on our southern border because the President is incentivizing illegal immigration, and it is taking everybody that is there for our national security to actually be on the border to manage the check-in staff for people coming in.

This is a ticking time bomb. It is solvable.

Let me give you just some very basic things on this. No. 1, keep title 42 in place. The Border Patrol that I speak to when I talk to the folks on the line, their No. 1 fear is the Biden administration is going to cancel title 42. Now, currently, the court is prohibiting them from doing that, but their biggest concern is, if the Biden administration cancels title 42, even more people will come across, and this chaos will be even worse. That is their No. 1 issue. Keep title 42 authority in place.

The second thing is, stop giving people that cross the border between the port of entry and illegally cross, stop giving them work permits that incentivizes people to come between the ports of entry in an illegal fashion. The administration can do that right now.

Third thing: Stop giving people a free pass to come into the country for 8 years to stay in the country while they await their asylum hearing.

Whoever is last in, first up for the asylum hearing, and do it right there at the border. The asylum hearings can be done in less than a month, and do it right there at the border so they have to remain in place to have their hearing.

What happens is, these individuals cross the border, they cross the border, they get their 8-year pass in the country, they get their work permit. They snap a picture of it. They send it to their family back home and say: I paid this cartel member this much money. I crossed in this spot. I stood in this line. When I got there, I got into the country. Come join me. And it keeps accelerating. That is a policy decision that the administration could stop now, and they are choosing not to stop now.

And the final thing on this. Again, it is not hard. Close that gap.

Why is this so hard? Close that gap.

We have fewer people crossing in California right now than we do in Yuma. Why is that? Because the gap is closed in California. And while many of my colleagues scream "fences don't work," why do we have fewer people crossing in California than we do in Yuma, AZ? Well, it is because there is a functioning fence in California and a big, giant gap in Yuma. This does work, and everybody knows it. That is why the Biden administration leaves it open—because they are facilitating this. This is something that is going to bite our Nation. It is a national security issue, and we should not ignore it.

Again, I celebrate legal immigration. I want more of it in our country. This is unchecked, illegal activity, and we had better pay attention to it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The Senator from Wyoming.

INFLATION

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today to talk about another Biden crisis. We just had my friend and colleague from Oklahoma talk about the crisis, as he saw it, at the southern border while he was on his trip there very recently. We hear from other colleagues about the crisis of crime in our cities across the country as another failure of this administration's. I come today to talk about the Biden economic crisis, which is hitting families in all of our States, in all of our communities, and it is the thing that I heard the very most about when I was home in Wyoming last week.

Across the country, summer is almost here. It is time for barbecues, visiting friends, and family vacations for many. This year, there will be many fewer who will be able to afford what has been a natural part of their family lives.

The American people have just been through the most expensive Memorial Day ever, and it has been painfully expensive for families across this country. This is just a preview of the summer of stress that families are going to be facing all across America. Hamburger meat today is at its highest price ever; chicken, its highest price ever; a gallon of gasoline, its highest price ever.

They say inflation is up by a certain percentage, but gas prices have doubled since Joe Biden became President. There has been a 100-percent increase in gas prices since the Democrats became the majority in the Senate and Joe Biden was sworn into office. Gas prices in America, under the Democrats, have gone up 15 out of 16 months since Joe Biden came to the White House and CHUCK SCHUMER came to be majority leader. Gas now costs more than \$4 a gallon on average in every State of the Union, and we are approaching \$5 on average across the country. In the liberal paradise of California, the gas price today is over \$6 a gallon if you can find it at that price. Financial analysts who have looked at

this thing recently predicted that the average price of a gallon of gasoline nationwide could be \$6.20 all across the country this summer.

So what do the President of the United States and the Democrats in this body have to do about that? What is the solution? Because people are looking for solutions.

The Democrats say: We run the place. We are the House. We are the Senate. We are the White House. We run the place.

Well, where are your solutions? I would say to those Democrats.

Oh, Joe Biden has a solution: I think I will go and beg for oil from Saudi Arabia. I think I will go and beg for oil from Saudi Arabia.

The Democratic policy on energy seems to be "anything but American energy." The Biden administration has already been begging Venezuela, Iran, the OPEC cartel, and even Vladimir Putin to sell us more oil. We have seen that all in the last year. If North Korea had oil, I am sure the Democrats would go and try to beg them as well. This President would rather beg the Saudis to sell us energy than to let hard-working American energy workers get it out of the ground here at home.

Now, we don't need to go to Saudi Arabia. We don't need to go to Iran. We don't need to go to Venezuela. We don't need to go to OPEC. We don't need to go to Russia. We have it here at home in America, and we have an abundance of energy. Joe Biden is transferring the wealth of our Nation to the Middle East. Why? Because that is a decision by Joe Biden and the Democrats—to send our wealth to the Middle East rather than to use the wealth that we have here in America.

Joe Biden has blocked off the vast majority of Federal lands from energy exploration and production. Even on the remaining Federal land, Joe Biden continues to cancel major oil and gas lease sales. Just last week, while Members were home, the Biden administration, with none of us in Washington but all of us at home, said they are going to redo the environmental reviews of leases made by the previous administration. Now, this includes 2,000 leases in my home State of Wyoming. For every existing energy lease, Joe Biden has done what he can to stop production there. He has put 4,300 drilling permits in limbo.

What does he say about this? He said it in Japan. He said: We are going through an incredible transition.

This is Joe Biden, the President of the United States.

He said: God willing, when this is over, this incredible transition we are going through, we will be stronger and less reliant on fossil fuels.

What Joe Biden is saying to every American is, tough luck. Take your medicine. Take your medicine, and pay the price because we are going through an incredible transition, and God willing, when it is over, we are going to be stronger.

The real transition that is happening today is that we are going from being a nation of energy dominance to being an energy-dependent nation. We are going from prosperity to poverty and from wealth to weakness. That is what we are getting from the Democrats in Congress, the Democrats in the Senate, the Democrats in the House, and Joe Biden.

Today, we are still producing 1 million barrels of oil fewer than we were before the pandemic. So what do Democrats want to do? Once again, the Secretary of the Treasury was with us yesterday. They want to raise taxes on the American public and on American energy. Well, what do you think higher taxes on energy production are going to do when oil is already at a point at which people are paying \$5 a gallon for gasoline?

For Democrats who choose to go home and listen to the people at home, I would imagine they are getting an earful from the people at home.

One Democratic Member of the Senate was on TV yesterday, bragging in a hearing. I saw it played a number of times. She didn't care how high energy prices went. She didn't care at all because she had an electric car and drove it here, from her home to Washington, DC, so it didn't matter. Oh, if you can't afford to have \$55,000 to buy an electric vehicle, too bad for you. That is the Democrats' response. That is what we are seeing in this country which Joe Biden has led into crisis after crisis.

High energy prices, of course, mean higher prices for almost everything else. Higher energy prices are already driving up food costs. For any Senator who went to a grocery store—and I am not sure how many Democrats do the shopping for themselves or how many Democrats saw how high food prices are, but I certainly saw it in Wyoming this past weekend—food prices are rising at the fastest rate in 40 years. Does a single Democratic Senator make reference to that? talk about it? come up with or try to find solutions for it? Will we have a solution? Joe Biden can't blame Vladimir Putin for high food prices. The price of food has gone up every single month—every single month—since Joe Biden came into office. High energy prices. High food prices.

There is a 40-year high of inflation in this country today, so inflation has driven the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates. What does that mean? Well, for the seniors and retirees who are watching their savings and their retirements melt away, it means a lot. Interest rates have gone up, and mortgage applications have dropped. Many Americans are giving up on their dreams of even owning their own homes.

Young mothers can't buy or find infant baby formula to buy. Joe Biden didn't see it coming. People saw it coming, and mothers saw it coming, but it was ignored by the administra-

tion. Once again, they dropped the ball, and the President was caught by surprise. Seven out of every ten stores in America have run out of baby formula. There have already been cases of children being hospitalized because they can't get the right kind of formula. What did the Biden administration finally say? They admitted they knew about the crisis last year; yet they did nothing.

Month after month after month, this administration did nothing. That is kind of what we have gotten with this President. The President is too slow—too slow to react, to slow to act, and too slow to respond to the needs of the American people. No wonder they are nicknaming him "Too Slow Joe." That is what we have in the White House today. It is a disgrace. The country deserves better. Americans of every background and in every stage of life are being punished by the bad policies of Joe Biden's and the Democrats' in Congress.

For most Americans, this is the worst economy they have ever seen. More and more Americans are having to borrow money just to pay the bills to try to keep up. Household debt is near an alltime high, and credit card day is near an alltime high. The average car in the United States is now 12 years old. This is a record high.

I would have to say to my colleague who bragged about having an electric car and driving it here and not caring about the fact that gas prices have gone up and was actually laughing about it, it seemed to me, well, you are different than most Americans, I would have to say, because most Americans can't do what you do. They don't have that opportunity. The average car in the United States is 12 years old because that is what people can afford, but they can hardly afford the gas to go in it. They can't afford to buy a new car or a used car, let alone an electric car.

Since Joe Biden became President, prices have gone up faster than wages. That is the complaint I continue to hear about at home. Month after month after month, the buying power of the average American family keeps going lower and lower and lower. Now two-thirds of the American people are talking about living paycheck to paycheck with nothing left over—nothing. As a result, the American people are feeling stuck and stressed and squeezed.

The pessimism of the economists is only exceeded by the pessimism of the American people about the Joe Biden economy. All told, Joe Biden's economic crisis has become a perfect storm of bad economic news.

Jamie Dimon is the CEO of JPMorgan Chase. He warned of an upcoming economic hurricane. The economic hurricane is a perfect storm of record inflation, record debt, a shortage of necessities, higher interest rates, vanishing savings, and a shrinking economy. The Biden inflation crisis

is quickly spiraling into an all-around economic crisis. If the Democrats continue on this path, it is going to get a lot worse soon.

Inflation for producers is even higher than inflation for consumers. In fact, inflation for producers has been the highest on record. Wholesale prices for producers went up 11 percent in the last year. That means higher prices for the people who grow our food, who build our buildings, and who keep the lights on. Inflation for producers today means inflation for consumers tomorrow.

After 13 months of this inflation crisis—a crisis that the administration kept ignoring, kept denying, kept refusing to admit was here, kept saying wasn't coming—the Secretary of the Treasury said: Well, if it comes, and there is a small chance it comes, it will be manageable.

There is no light at the end of the tunnel. If there is any light at the end of the tunnel, it is because the freight train marked "recession" is about to hit America. Inflation is so bad that the Democrats can't even deny it anymore. So they create it; they ignore it; they deny it; they blame inflation on everybody else.

Yesterday, in the Finance Committee, the Secretary of the Treasury said: No, no. It wasn't them.

The Democrats denied it. They said: No, no. It was Putin. It was the pandemic.

But now the Democrats want to make it worse.

Well, it took about 14 months, but Janet Yellen admitted earlier this week in a CNN interview that she had been wrong about inflation. When she said there was a slight risk, she was mistaken. When she said it was manageable, she was mistaken.

She said: Now, I was wrong about the path inflation would take. This is the Secretary of the Treasury for Joe Biden, his handpicked person to run the economy. She also admitted that inflation was a matter of supply and demand and that the spending in the American Rescue Plan did feed the demand. I think she is talking about the \$2 trillion that every Democrat voted for and that every Republican voted against; the \$2 trillion to which even the Democratic economists said: Don't do that. It is going to make us have bad inflation. And we had bad inflation. But Joe Biden and the Secretary of the Treasury and every Democrat in the House and Senate voted in favor of pouring fuel on the fire that turned into the inflation we are facing today.

This was an enormous mistake on the part of the Democrats and the President—CHUCK SCHUMER and every Democrat in this Senate, all the Democrats in the House and Speaker NANCY PELOSI. It is costing the average American family today \$5,000 more this year than last year just to stay even—not to get ahead, just to stay even.

Democrats were warned. They were warned by Republicans. They were

warned by their own experts, and they ignored it; simply, flatly ignored the warnings, passed the largest spending bill in American history. And ever since that day, inflation has spiraled out of control. More than a year later, Democrats still don't have anything to offer beyond blame and excuses.

Last week, the Secretary of Commerce was asked:

Is there one specific category [of high prices] where you think you can actually make a difference?

This is her answer. She said:

I wish.

That is what Democrats are left with: wishes, wishes—no plan to fix the crisis that they have created.

Joe Biden's so-called energy inflation plan made so many false promises. And he talked about this. He wrote an editorial in the Wall Street Journal. You would think that maybe somebody at the White House who wrote it would have been vetted before they gave it to the President, before he put his name on it. It got Four Pinocchios from the Washington Post which talked about what the President had to say about energy as just being a lie.

We know what we need to do. We need to stop the reckless spending. We need to unleash American energy. Instead of canceling lease sales, Joe Biden needs to open up Federal lands to American energy production instead. Instead of canceling pipelines, Joe Biden should speed up the pipeline permitting process. Instead of begging other countries to sell us oil, we should get it out of the ground right here in America.

Oh, we have the American energy skills and skilled workers to see us through this crisis. The President just needs to let them go to work.

Working families have already been pushed to the breaking point. People are spending their savings, seeing it melting away. They have run up credit cards just to get by, and now recession is heading toward us. We need to change course. The administration needs to change course because the Joe Biden economic hurricane is about to hit America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, yesterday, as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I had the honor of welcoming a group of important guests to Washington.

The committee was joined by the families of some of the victims in last month's mass shooting in Buffalo, NY, when a White supremacist marched into the Tops Grocery store with an assault rifle and massacred 10 Black Americans in cold blood and wounded three others. Just weeks after laying their loved ones to rest, these families flew to Washington to deliver one very simple, straightforward message to Congress: Do something. Do something

to prevent the next mass shooting, to combat the lethal threat posed by violent White supremacists, to honor the memory of those who were slain in this horrifying act of racist violence.

One of the family members who attended yesterday was Garnell Whitfield, Jr., and his brother Raymond. Their mother Ruth Whitfield was the eldest victim in this Buffalo shooting. She was 86 years old.

In the hours before her murder, Mrs. Whitfield just finished her regular daily ritual, visiting her husband, Mr. Whitfield's father, at his nursing home. The two had been married for 68 years, and in an instant, she was gone. Her family is shattered.

During yesterday's hearing, Mr. Whitfield courageously voiced what millions of Americans feel about the devastating run of mass shootings in America: outrage. He asked me and the fellow committee members there a really important question:

What are you doing? You were elected to protect us. Is there nothing that you [can] personally [be] willing to do to stop the cancer of White supremacy and the domestic terrorism it inspires?

Mr. Whitfield concluded his testimony with the following words I hope every Member of the Senate will hear. He said:

Mrs. Ruth Whitfield's life mattered. Your actions here will tell us if and how much it mattered to you.

We heard the same sentiment from across the country—from Uvalde, TX, to Chicago, IL. It is impossible to keep track of these mass shootings. They have claimed so many innocent lives.

During this past weekend alone, our Nation was hit with at least 10 of them—10. Think about it: In this country, 10 in one weekend. In many countries—most countries around the world—there are none. No other developed Nation on Earth experiences this degree of bloody carnage every day, every week. And if we want to prove to Americans like Garnell Whitfield that the lives of their loved ones who were lost really do matter to us, we have to do something in the Senate.

The first thing is simple: close the loopholes on the purchase of guns. Currently, there is a bipartisan group of Senators working on this issue. I commend this group, especially Senators MURPHY and CORNYN—Democrat and Republican—who are leading this effort.

We are also going to hold a hearing next week in the Judiciary Committee over a phenomena which is equally embarrassing. Gunfire is now the leading cause of death for kids in America. Did you hear that? Gunfire, the leading cause of death of children in America.

We talk about protecting our kids, our highest priority. Well, the guns are killing our kids more than automobiles, more than poison, more than accidents in the home.

DOMESTIC TERRORISM

Madam President, that brings me to our second obligation to families like